

– REMARKS OF MAYOR PAUL D. FRAM –
KROC CENTER DEDICATION CEREMONY
SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 2014
1:00PM

Chairman Brinkley . . . Captain Meredith . . . Dr. Robertson . . . other distinguished guests . . . ladies and gentlemen . . . What a great moment for Norfolk, and for the Salvation Army.

This is a day we've been looking forward to for quite some time . . . and it's easy to tell from the energy in the room that you are just as excited as I am that we've reached the final destination on a long and eventful journey. To simply say that I am pleased to be here just doesn't communicate the sense of pride and accomplishment that I feel for this amazing facility.

So it is more than a pleasure – it is, in every respect, an honor – to have this opportunity to represent the citizens of Norfolk at the dedication ceremony for the Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center.

It hardly seems possible that nearly 10 years have passed since it was announced that Norfolk had been chosen as the location for Virginia's only Kroc Center. At the time, we were well into the largest redevelopment project in the city's history . . . the revitalization of a three square mile section known as Broad Creek.

Before then, the surrounding area held the communities of Bowling Green and Roberts Village - 767 units of aging public housing that had fallen into a distressed state. This led Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority to apply to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for a grant to redevelop the area as a mixed-income community.

In the summer of 2000, HUD awarded NRHA \$35 million dollars to implement the plan. Soon afterwards, work began on 690 residential units offering rental and home ownership opportunities for all income levels.

The new Broad Creek community made its debut in 2005 at the Tidewater Builders Association Home-A-Rama. Since then, it has been recognized with prestigious awards from the National Association of Homebuilders and the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials for the quality of its residential design.

It also led to an increase in real estate values which have grown from \$138 million dollars in 2000, to \$381 million dollars today.

An additional 200 homes and apartments, a new elementary school and an anchor branch library are planned for the future.

The Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center is a vitally important addition to Broad Creek and to Norfolk. It represents an investment in our most valuable resource - the people of this city and the region.

The Kroc Center's programs and activities will nourish minds, bodies and souls, and will make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of thousands of young people for many years to come.

Without the generosity of Ray and Joan Kroc, and the wise and progressive vision of the Salvation Army and its local board, we would not be here today.

Neither would we be here had the endowment campaign not received such generous support from so many in our community.

They include Frank Batten, Jr., the Batten Foundation, the Landmark Foundation, the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority, the City and others.

It also includes the late Josh Darden, a strong supporter of the project, and whose leadership of the local fundraising campaign was the key to its success.

Sadly, Josh did not live to share this moment with us, but even so, his spirit is felt in the hearts of all here today who knew him.

He and other donors will be recognized in a few moments, but I wanted to take this opportunity to extend the thanks and appreciation of the City Council and the citizens of Norfolk to everyone who gave so generously to ensure this facility would be built.

It is an example of community support equal to anywhere in the country, and shows once again why Norfolk has been able to achieve more than what might reasonably be expected for a city of our size.

Finally, let me thank everyone with the Salvation Army for your confidence in Norfolk – confidence that led to the decision to build a Kroc Center here. You believed in Norfolk . . . you believed in the vision for Broad Creek . . . and you believed our community possessed not just the desire, but the ability, the capacity and the will to fulfill what was required of us to have a Kroc Center.

In return, you have given us an absolutely extraordinary facility, a facility that is going to be a great asset for many years to come. Thank you.